

Republicans seem proud that this prestigious body has been labeled the Do-Nothing Congress.

For the past 2 years, Democrats have repeatedly called on the Republicans to tackle a pro-jobs, pro-middle class agenda. Democrats have consistently put forth proposals that would grow jobs, provide workers with a living wage, and fix our broken immigration system. Instead of working with Democrats to bring about the change supported by the majority of Americans, Republicans have refused to act.

Instead, the Republican majority has spent the 113th Congress appealing to the fringes of the Republican Party. They wasted hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars trying to defend the Defense of Marriage Act. They held hearing after hearing after hearing to pursue conspiracy theories about Benghazi at the expense of our Nation's delicate work in a volatile region. And for the first time in the history of our Republic, the Republicans voted to sue the President of the United States for delaying a health care mandate that they themselves have long opposed.

□ 1045

My Republican colleagues, Mr. Speaker, routinely walk away from key discussions and negotiations, failing to lead, but worse, failing the American people. They have, however, succeeded in making this Republican-controlled House one of the least productive and most divided in our Nation's history.

In the Senate where 60 votes are needed to pass any bill, Republicans have also been successful in blocking important proposals that have the overwhelming support of the American people. As a result, Americans' confidence in Congress has fallen to less than 10 percent.

The American people desperately need their elected representatives to come together to advance policies that benefit our citizens. The American people don't care about Republicans or Democrats. They care about us working to improve their lives, but Republicans insist on driving us further apart.

Instead of doing the work we were elected to do, House Republicans have scheduled another 5-week break beginning in October. I guess obstruction must really be exhausting to all of them.

There is so much work that remains to be done. I pray my Republican colleagues hear me. Now is the time to work the will of the American people. That is what we were sent here to do.

I urge the majority to end this Congress on a high note. Cancel the 5-week break. I am serious. Cancel the 5-week break. I can handle it if you can handle it.

Let's raise the minimum wage, reform our immigration system, and ensure equal pay for equal work. It is what the American people expect and deserve.

MEDICAID EXPANSION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Alabama (Ms. SEWELL) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SEWELL of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the urgent need for 24 States to expand Medicaid for the 5.7 million Americans who fall into the Medicaid gap.

Among those excluded are 435,000 cashiers, 341,000 cooks, and 253,000 nurses' aides. These hardworking Americans should not have to choose between groceries and medicine or between rent and a doctor's visit.

On behalf of all Alabamians, I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my colleagues, Representatives BUTTERFIELD and JOHNSON, for heading up the State Medicaid Expansion Caucus, of which I am a proud member.

It is painfully unsettling that the 24 States not expanding Medicaid are the very States where the concentration of those living in poverty and without health care is the most acute. The 24 States that have rejected Medicaid expansion are home to over half of the Nation's population, but 68 percent of the poor, uninsured, Blacks, and single mothers. These constituents have the highest burden of illness and costs to our entire health care system.

The 235,000 Alabamians and 5.7 million Americans who fall in the coverage gap are our most vulnerable citizens. About 60 percent of the Nation's uninsured working poor live in these 24 States.

These individuals pay their taxes, they work hard, and they contribute to our community. Our government should support them in return. To not expand Medicaid for these hardworking Americans is reckless disregard for their dramatic needs and their important work that they do in our community.

Expanding Medicaid is not only a moral imperative, but an economic imperative as well. There is not a State in the country that will benefit from its refusal to accept Federal dollars provided to them to expand their Medicaid program.

Alabamians need jobs, and they need health care. Without raising a cent in taxes, my Governor and State leaders can achieve both job creation and health care coverage by expanding Medicaid.

The facts are clear. There is not an economic development investment in Alabama's history that would provide the State with 35,000 new jobs like Medicaid expansion would. Our State leaders cannot be honest with their constituents in arguing that they are interested in economic development while turning down \$375 million a quarter.

In the State of Alabama, the income ceiling for Medicaid in its current form for a family of three is \$3,560 annually. That is less than \$10 a day for a family of three. This is the lowest Medicaid income ceiling in the country. So families that earn a mere \$15 a day are left

behind when it comes to being able to afford access to affordable health care.

While I understand the political realities in which we operate and in which my Governor operates, I do not understand the shameful neglect of our most vulnerable constituents, our rural hospitals, and our fragile economy that is presented in our State's refusal to accept Medicaid expansion.

Our most sacred responsibility to serve our constituents shall not be examined and instituted through such a dangerous partisan lens. With each day that my State of Alabama delays expansion, more of our constituents are unable to work due to unrelated health conditions.

Americans who are both impoverished and sick should not have to wait one more day while our State leaders play political football with this urgent issue.

This is why I am so proud to stand with my colleagues in the State Medicaid Expansion Caucus today in sending a clear message to our State leaders that enough is enough. We need to expand Medicaid now for every State in the Union.

RECESS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 12(a) of rule I, the Chair declares the House in recess until noon today.

Accordingly (at 10 o'clock and 51 minutes a.m.), the House stood in recess.

□ 1200

AFTER RECESS

The recess having expired, the House was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. RODNEY DAVIS of Illinois) at noon.

PRAYER

Reverend Cliff Lea, First Baptist Church of Leesburg, Leesburg, Florida, offered the following prayer:

Living Lord, it is an honor to come and open our hearts before You today. We acknowledge Your greatness and power over us and all things. Thank You for salvation.

It is with our deepest gratitude that we thank You for the privilege of being called Americans. With humility, let us realize the responsibility this privilege entails. Let Your presence in us be the light that causes this Nation to shine bright in the world.

Grant Your favor, wisdom, and protection to our troops here and abroad. Place within our leaders and Representatives, here in the House and the Senate, a desire to make God-honoring decisions. May our President be guided by Your truth. In our differences, let us see You first.

Please give each of us in this place and every citizen of this Nation a contrite heart and willingness to follow Your way.